

YOUR Health

Public Health Programs & Services - Department of Health Services - County of Los Angeles

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Make Summertime a Healthy Time

Summertime gives us many opportunities to have fun: picnics, sports, travel. Take advantage of California's fine summer weather to be active and more fit. This issue of Your Health shares sage summer sense to ensure a safe and happy summer.

News to Note:

Health Information Research For You

Do you want to know more about a disease, drug, or medical treatment? One place for information is CHIPS - Consumer Health Information Program and Services. CHIPS is provided by the County of Los Angeles Public Library and cofounded by the Los Angeles County Harbor-UCLA Medical Center Library. CHIPS gives current, accurate medical information and materials on request. They will research your question, copy the information, and mail it to your home.

The research is free. The only charge is for photocopying and postage. Visit, call, or write CHIPS at:

CHIPS
151 E. Carson St.
Carson, CA 90745
(310) 830-0909

Be Summer Safe and Summer Smart

Summertime is a good time for outdoor fun. Keep your summer activities healthy and safe too.

other activities that keep you moving are also great ways to make movement part of daily life.

Encourage children on school breaks during the summer to play sports and other games that keep them moving. Don't let them spend their vacation watching TV or playing video games. The same goes for adults.



Eating healthier and being more active are the best ways to lose weight. Summertime is a great time to get the fresh fruits and vegetables which are an important part of a healthy diet.

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Nearly half of Los Angeles County adults are overweight with a third of those severely overweight. That means 50% of us are at greater risk for heart disease, stroke, and other weight-related problems.

When looking to be active, don't think only of "exercise." Gardening, walking, dancing, playing with children, and many

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Don't Get Beat by the Heat

When it's hot, don't get undone by the sun. Getting too hot can cause heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

Heat exhaustion comes from losing body fluids, such as by sweating. Symptoms include heavy sweating; feeling weak, tired, or dizzy; having a headache, nausea, or blurred vision; damp skin; and feeling scared. Someone feeling this way should drink water and lay flat with their head down. Prevent heat exhaustion by drinking lots of water, fruit juice, or clear sodas. Note: drinks with alcohol or caffeine actually make your body lose water faster because they make you go to the bathroom more often.

Heatstroke is an emergency; call 911 right away.

Heatstroke happens when the body cannot shed heat and the temperature rises above normal. Symptoms include dry, hot skin; feeling like you are "burning up;" headache; weakness; and falling unconscious. Heatstroke is an emergency; call 911 right away. Cool a heatstroke victim's body by wrapping or putting him/her in cold water or ice until medical help arrives. Fortunately, heatstroke is rare.

Stay alert in hot weather. Watch friends and family for signs that signal heat exhaustion and heatstroke:

- Watch children and the elderly closely to see the first signs of heat illness.
- During hot weather check in on homebound family and neighbors, especially if they don't have air conditioning.
- Never ever leave children or pets alone in a car.

Be Summer Safe and Summer Smart *(cont. from p. 1)*

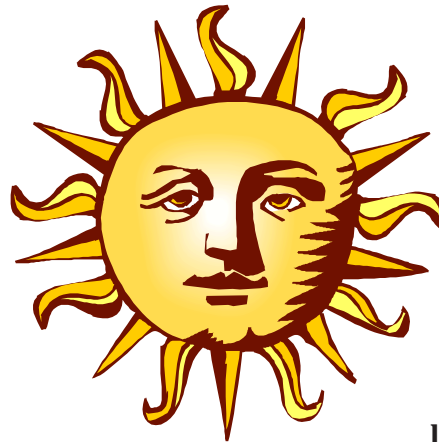
Have five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Try eating raw vegetables and dried fruit for snacks, offer two vegetables with dinner, and serve fresh, frozen, or canned fruit for dessert.

Wear the Gear

With more people playing outdoors in the summer, it's especially important to avoid injuries while playing and walking on streets or riding bicycles.

When driving, be aware of children. Watch for children darting out from curbs, especially near ice cream trucks. When caring for children, do not let them play in unsafe areas. Children should not share play space with fast moving traffic.

- Everyone who in-line skates or skateboards should wear helmets and knee, wrist, and elbow pads to prevent injuries.
- Headgear is important for skating or playing street hockey, and it's required by State law for children and youth cycling. More than 100,000 people nationally, many of them children, suffer head injuries each year.
- Set a good example for children by always wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle.



Inexpensive but effective bicycle helmets are available at many sporting goods and toy stores.

"Safe Moves," sponsors a program giving helmets to children and seniors who can't afford them. Call Safe Moves at (818) 908-5341.

Be Sun Smart

Our summer days are bright and long. But, you can get too much of a good thing.

When exercising this summer, don't overdo it when it is very hot. Drink plenty of water, sports drinks, and fruit juices.

A lot of sun on your skin now can lead to skin cancer

later, especially if you sunburn easily or have a hard time getting a tan. To reduce your risks from the sun's powerful rays:

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat outdoors to protect your face and head. Also, cover your arms and legs.
- Use sunscreen when you will spend a lot of time in the sun, especially between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. when the sun's ultraviolet rays are most intense.
- Apply sunscreen 30-40 minutes before going out into the sun. Use a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15.

Travel Health Tips

Whether your summer plans are to far away locales or local beaches and parks, the tips below can help keep you comfortable throughout your trip:

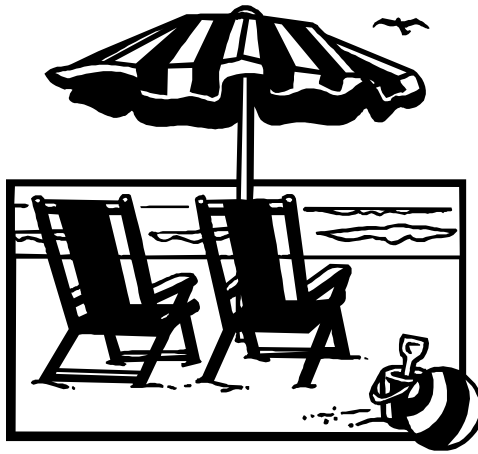
Traveler's Diarrhea

One of the most common concerns for people on vacation is to prevent the nausea, bloating, and urgency of traveler's diarrhea. It can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites in food or water.

The best way to prevent traveler's diarrhea is by paying close attention to what you eat and drink, especially when you are traveling in high risk areas such as Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

- Don't drink beverages with ice.
- Avoid tap water and fountain drinks.
- Do drink bottled or boiled water or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles.
- Make sure milk, cheese, and other dairy products have been pasteurized.
- Don't eat food bought from street vendors.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables that you have peeled yourself.

Also keep your local vacation picnic food safe by keeping hot food hot and cold food cold. Don't mix cooked foods with uncooked foods or dishes or utensils used with uncooked foods. Make individual portions rather than having many people reach in to share a bowl or tray of food. And throw away prepared foods that have been at room temperature for more than two hours.



Vaccinations

Another important thing to think about for international travel is vaccinations or shots.

See a doctor at least 4-6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect. What shots you need varies according to where you go, for how long, and your activities. For example, protection when visiting a rural area may require a vaccine not needed if you stay in the city. The doctor can also check if there's a disease outbreak where you're going.

Also, make sure you are up-to-date on routine immunizations and check if you need another dose for tetanus-diphtheria (Td) or measles.

Many locations will also require you to take antimalarial drugs before, during, and after your trip to prevent infection with malaria.

Call the County Immunization Program for a referral to a travel immunization provider by calling 1-800-427-8700.

Safety

When you are away from home, follow basic safety measures to make sure your fun adventure isn't brought up short.

Wherever you travel, in the U.S. or abroad, remember these tips:

- Bring sun screen, sunglasses, and a hat.
- Follow safer sex guidelines.
- Take enough of your prescription medicines to last the trip and bring a copy of your prescription(s) and a written list of all medications you're taking.
- Make a plan for emergency care in case of injury or illness.

When traveling in less developed countries, follow these suggestions:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Bring an over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
- Do not go barefoot outdoors except at poolside or the beach and keep feet clean and dry to prevent fungal and parasitic infections.
- Don't handle unfamiliar animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (like rabies and plague).
- Don't swim in fresh water lakes or streams. Salt water is usually safer.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants when possible to prevent illnesses carried by insects like mosquitos or ticks.
- Wear insect repellent.

California State Law Update

Seventh Graders Require Additional Shots: Hepatitis B and Measles

A new California law started July 1, 1999 requiring students to have Hepatitis B and Measles vaccinations in order to attend 7th grade this fall.

Hepatitis B is a virus that can cause liver cancer and, in some cases, death. To be fully immunized requires a series of three shots over a period of six months.



Measles was a common serious childhood illness in the United States before regular infant vaccination (often given as MMR) was widespread. The new law requires 7th graders to get a second measles shot to bring them up to date with current kindergarten entry law.

Hepatitis B and a second dose of measles were not part of regular baby shots when your pre-teen was young, so most of the 135,000

students entering 7th grade this fall need to get immunized.

Parents of 7th graders registering this fall will be required to show proof of their children's hepatitis and measles immunizations.

If a 7th grader has not begun the hepatitis series, or is overdue for a hepatitis or measles shot, he/she will be excluded from school until the dose is received. Medical and personal exemptions will be allowed.

The new law also recommends that the children get their first tetanus-diphtheria (Td) booster if it has been five or more years since the last dose. Pre-teens should also get a chickenpox (varicella) shot if they never had chicken pox.

Adolescents often don't see a doctor every year so it is very important to ask the doctor about immunizations even if he/she is being seen for another reason. Ask if shots could be given during a sports physical exam or when the pre-teen is being seen for a cold. Many schools are also providing shots on site.

For more information, call your doctor, school, or the County Immunization Program at 1-800-427-8700.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Law In Effect June 1, 1999

A new State law that took effect this summer requires contractors to let people know about possible lead hazards when they are renovating a home or apartment.

Lead can hurt a child's growing brain, changing behavior and reducing intelligence. The most common source for lead poisoning is from lead-based paint. Some paints contained lead until 1978. Homes built before 1950 are the most likely to have lead paints.

Before contractors, handymen, and others start work to improve and fix homes, they must give owners and occupants of housing built before 1978 a pamphlet called "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home." The purpose of the law is to teach people about lead sources in their homes and to make them aware of times when lead might be released, such as during construction.

Lead paint, especially on water-damaged walls, can give off lead dust that is too small to see. The lead dust then settles in your home with other dust. Children putting paint flakes into their mouths can also cause lead poisoning. Another possible source is from lead soldering in plumbing.

A blood test is the only way to know if a child has lead poisoning.

All young children that live in houses or apartments built before 1950 should have a lead blood test during their annual physical exam. A blood test is the only way to know if a child has lead poisoning. In many cases, Medi-Cal or CHDP will pay for the test. For more information about lead poisoning and lead tests call the County Lead Prevention Program at 1-800-LA-4-LEAD.

Your Health is published quarterly by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Public Health Programs and Services. You are welcome to make copies of this newsletter to share with others.



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